NATIONAL
ENDOWMENT
FOR THE ARTS

THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIPS 1997

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Guardians of tradition, these men and women embody the ideals established through the National Heritage Awards: to carry the best of our cultural heritage forward to a new generation. Through their devotion to their art, their dedication to acquiring the necessary skills and craft, and their attention to the voices and visions of their ancestors and kinsmen, these folk and traditional artists have earned the appellation of master artist. There is no question nor debate over their inclusion in this august group of artists who have received the Heritage Award since its inception in 1982. They are our national cultural treasures, and the legacy they bring forward will live into the next millennium, thanks in no small part to their efforts and talents.

Take any measure of contemporary culture and you will find that the true and authentic are sorely lacking. The artists whom we honor through this award are the exception. There is nothing false about them. They are as real as the calluses on their fingers, the songs held in their memories, and the history swept forward through their art. Prick up your ears and open your eyes, for their like are disappearing. We should cherish and remember their ineffable value to our shared cultural heritage.

Congratulations to one and all, and thank you to the many people who make this celebration possible.

Jane Alexander
Chairman

The director of the Southwest Folklore Center of the University of Arizona Library, Jim Griffith, once told me that the goal of every festival, television or radio program, or book on folk traditions that he produced (and there have been many) could be described in a single word—respect. But by respect he didn't mean merely a legalistic deference to the rights of others, but rather a greater, more profound respect born of the knowledge, understanding, and appreciation of those with whom we share our society. The meaning-laden, expressive nature of art forms traditional to American communities that we share this evening are some of the clearest windows and most inviting paths to a deeper understanding of one another in our culturally pluralistic society.

Along with recognizing superlative folk and traditional artists for their contributions to their art forms, to their communities, and to the Nation, cultivating this same sense of knowledgeable respect is the other main purpose of the National Heritage Fellowship program. This year, we are joined in our efforts by a private partner, Target Stores, enabling us to strengthen and expand our efforts at making the National Heritage Fellowships an even greater celebration for all Americans. Through this concert gala, through the nationally-distributed radio special that will be produced from it, and through the White House ceremony and press attention that celebrate them, our aim is to give millions of Americans the opportunity to appreciate these heroes of our collective national cultural heritage.

Thank you for joining us this evening, for you are as much a part of this event as anyone else!

Dan Sheehy
Director, Folk & Traditional Arts
National Endowment for the Arts

MASTER OF CEREMONIES

NICK SPITZER is a scholar, documentary producer, and program host known for his informed and witty style in presenting traditional arts and artists, cultures and communities to audiences from Carnegie Hall to the National Mall, from National Public Radio to PBS. After a decade at the Smithsonian – first as a senior folklife specialist, later an artistic director and co-editor of the book *Public Folklore* – he was named a fellow in 1996 at Santa Fe's School of American research to work on a book about zydeco music and Louisiana Creole culture. Nick has recently returned to Louisiana where he had previously served as the State Folklorist. Currently the Zemurray Professor of Folklore & Cultural Conservation at the University of New Orleans' College of Urban and Public Affairs, Nick is known to Washington and public radio audiences nationwide for his award-winning Folk Masters series from Wolf Trap, insightful cultural features on All Things Considered, and as artistic director of the annual American Roots 4th of July. Back in New Orleans, Spitzer is creating American Routes – a weekly two-hour program devoted to the roots of popular music and popular roots music – to be distributed by Public Radio International in spring 1998.

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CREDITS

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TARGET

EDWARD BABB

"Shout" Band Gospel Musician — Trombonist & Band Leader

African-American religious musical expressions, created from a blending of African worship style and Christian theology, take many forms and are shaped by the creative hand of strong musical leaders. These multiple manifestations include the deeply-rooted spiritual song, jubilee music, the lined-out hymn, a cappella quartet singing, mass choirs, and other forms and styles. One of the less widely recognized, but highly influential, of these traditions is the instrumental "shout band" of the United House of Prayer. The senior elder statesman and musical model of this community-grounded tradition is Elder Edward Babb, nicknamed "Trip," the trombone-playing director of The McCollough Sons of Thunder Brass Band.

In the 1920s, a Cape Verde Islands-born charismatic spiritual leader named Marcelino Manoel de Graca and nicknamed "Daddy Grace" founded the first United House of Prayer for All People, the Church on the Rock of the Apostolic Faith, in Newport News, Virginia. According to gospel scholar Dr. Horace Boyer, Bishop Grace "took a musical departure from Psalm 150 where David declared that 'Everything that hath breath [should] praise the Lord,' and encouraged the use of brass and reed instruments within the church service. It is from his denomination . . . that modern gospel music – the most arresting music of the last half of the 20th century – based their use of the accompanying instruments, other than the piano and organ. The legacy of the 'Daddy Grace Band' is so strong that it influenced many of the rhythm and blues and jazz instrumentalists of contemporary music." The unique musical style he created applied the instrumental jazz instrumentation of his time a sousaphone, percussion and a trombone chorus, backing up a trombone lead "voice" – to perform gospel hymns. While Bishop Grace died in the 1960s, this music continues to energize the services of ecstatic devotion in the more than 130 United House of Prayer congregations nationwide.

Elder Babb directs the band for New York City's United House of Prayer. The church, referred to by congregation members as "Sweet Honey, Heaven Harlem," is located on the corner of 125th Street and Eighth Avenue, near the historic Apollo Theatre. The band Elder Babb directs, the McCollough Band, takes its named from Daddy Grace's successor, Daddy McCollough. Having existed for three decades, it is considered the senior band within the church. Elder Babb, a soft-spoken insurance salesman, leads the church-rocking devotional music that invites the Holy Spirit into the congregation's worship. "That spirit radiates through the brass, out the horn to the people, and then they can feel it. It's like fire shut up in the bones," says Elder Babb. Church leader Apostle H. M. Swaringer praises both Babb's musical and devotional abilities: "He can judge the mood of the crowd and create a sound that will touch the hearts of every person sitting within hearing distance of his trombone, like he is playing something you have been waiting to hear and didn't know it."

Elder Babb is known among church members as one of "The Three Stars of the Kingdom," one of the three early creators of this musical style. Tragically, the past four years have seen the death of the other two "Stars," George Holland of Newport News and Norvus Miller of Washington, D.C. In 1993, Babb, Holland, and Miller were honored by their church for both their artistic excellence and their spiritual devotion in a program in Washington, D.C., "Legends of Leaders." In 1990, Elder Babb and the McCollough Sons of Thunder band performed in Carnegie Hall as part of the "Folk Masters" concert series.

CHARLES BROWN

West Coast Blues Pianist & Composer

Folk tradition, by definition, reflects the experiences, values, and outlook of a group of people. Blues music is a good example of the dynamic nature of a tradition as it is shaped over time to embody the essence of a changing culture. In the Mississippi Delta region, the "Delta blues" were actually a mosaic of local "country blues" styles. As blacks migrated out of the South in search of greater opportunity, more urban styles such as the electrified, hard-hitting "Chicago" blues evolved. Another of these urban styles, known as the "West Coast" blues, emerged during the World War II years in the burgeoning black community of Los Angeles. One of the key creators of the urbane and mellow West Coast style was pianist/singer Charles Brown.

Born in Texas City, Texas in 1922, Charles Brown began studying classical piano at the age of ten, encouraged by his maternal grandmother,who raised him after his mother died, and his itinerant cotton-laborer father. His grandmother instilled in her grandson the importance of education, and he eventually completed a degree in chemistry, briefly taught school, and worked as a laboratory chemist during the early war years. Early in his life, he was deeply affected by the music of jazz great Art Tatum and his sophisticated approach that blended classical techniques and dynamics with the blues and jazz. Moving to Los Angeles in 1944, Brown joined The Three Blazers, whose sound epitomized the cool, relaxed West Coast piano trio style but also integrated a melancholy blues quality. With The Three Blazers, Brown recorded "Driftin' Blues," "Merry Christmas Baby," "Sunny Road," and other classics of the West Coast club blues style. In the early 1950s, Brown's prominence in the rhythm and blues circuit continued, as he toured with Fats Domino, Bill Doggett, Roy Brown, Amos Milburn, and others. Unlike his peers, Ray Charles and Nat "King" Cole, Brown did not adopt a more commercial sound as the popularity of rock and roll overshadowed rhythm and blues in the marketplace. He preferred to perform in his own style for club audiences.

In the 1960s and 1970s, as the electrified "Chicago" and "Texas" blues styles caught on with rock fans and as the "rough-edged" Delta blues dominated the folk music market, Charles Brown and his suave, bluesy sound slipped between the commercially successful niches of blues, jazz, and popular ballads. "I would not call myself really a blues singer. I think I'm a ballad singer, because I sing my ballads my way and yet they sound bluesy," he explains. During this period his success in the popular media did not match that of his early years in Los Angeles. Still, blues aficionados regarded him as a seminal founder and upholder of the unique West Cost tradition.

The perspective of time has revealed the importance of Charles Brown's accomplishments and has brought renewed attention to his music. He was profiled in the 1988 nationally-aired PBS special "That Rhythm . . . Those Blues," following his 1987 "comeback" recording, "One More for the Road . . ." In 1993, he appeared as the headline artist on the nationally broadcast "American Roots Fourth of July" radio concert from the Washington Monument. In 1997, he was inducted into the Blues Foundation's Blues Hall of Fame.

GLADYS LEBLANC CLARK

Acadian (Cajun) Spinner & Weaver

When most people think of Cajun culture, music, dance and food are usually the first things that come to mind. But "Cajun" also describes a way of life with a world view and shared experiences that are expressed in many other forms as well. When French-speaking Acadians (the root form of "Cajun") came to Louisiana from Nova Scotia as refugees in the late 18th century, they had to adapt their traditions to new surroundings. Hand-woven textiles had long been essential to Acadian life. In Louisiana the ancient skills and aesthetic tastes of the Acadian textile tradition were adapted, using the raw materials at hand. Cotton replaced wool and linen, and the range of dyes and tools was limited. Despite these limitations, Acadian women produced a wide variety of products, patterns, and textures. A distinctive and much admired Cajun weaving style emerged over the following two centuries. The most deeply traditional of the inheritors of this cherished art form is Mrs. Gladys LeBlanc Clark of Duson, Louisiana.

Born in 1918 in Lafayette Parish, Louisiana, Gladys LeBlanc Clark's family, including her mother, aunt, paternal grandmother, and maternal great-grandmother were all spinners and weavers. Immersed in her rich traditional home life, Gladys learned to card and spin cotton by the age of eight, and by her teens, she was an accomplished weaver. She recalls the importance of carding, spinning, and weaving to social life, "All the ladies . . . could spin and weave. So they would have carding parties, *la cardrie*. Everybody would bring their cards and assemble all the chairs from the neighborhood. We would card all afternoon and they would serve lemonade and cookies. Mama would spin at night." Perhaps the principle creation of a weaver's life was a trousseau given to each of her children when they got married. A typical trousseau was prodigious and might include twelve blankets, two or three bedspreads, six sheets, twelve towels, one feather mattress covering one bolster, and two pillows plus three mattresses stuffed with Spanish moss. Mrs. Clark still chooses to use the brown cotton (*coton jaune* – literally "yellow cotton," though it has a brown appearance) that distinguishes Cajun textiles. Brown cotton was common in the area until the mid 19th century when the availability of commercial dyes eliminated its profitability, though the Cajuns continued to look to brown and white cotton and various shades of indigo dye as their principle color sources.

In the 1940s, the LeBlanc family members were prominent weaving demonstrators and instructors in brown cotton weaving for Louisiana State University's Louisiana Handicrafts Project organized by Louise Olivier that opened new markets outside the local community. As the Handicrafts Project faded, Mrs. Clark continued to grow, pick, seed, card, spin, and weave her own cotton on her farm with her husband Alexis, still finding outlets for her goods through local stores and word-of-mouth. With the growing awareness of Cajun culture in the 1970s and 1980s, Mrs. Clark became a regular demonstrator of her tradition at public events such as the Louisiana Native Crafts Festival at the Lafayette Natural History Museum, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival, the Smithsonian Festival of American Folklife, and the Louisiana Folklife Festival. She has served as a master teacher in the Louisiana state folk arts apprenticeship program, and in 1996, the Acadiana Arts Council honored her with its Acadian Folk Heritage Award.

GEORGIA HARRIS

Catawba Potter

Georgia Harris, master Catawba potter, was selected to receive a 1997 National Heritage Fellowship. Sadly, for all of us, she passed away before the fellowship could be awarded.

Born in 1905, Georgia Harris learned pottery at the age of nine from her mother, Margaret Harris (1879-1926) and her grandmother, Martha Jane Harris (1854-1936). According to folklorist Douglas De Natale, Georgia Harris was "universally recognized among the potters themselves as the finest potter of this century." "The Catawba potters constitute the only group of Indian potters east of the Mississippi River which has maintained this . . . art form in a nearly pure state from pre-Columbian times to the present," scholar Dr. Thomas J. Blumer believes. While the Catawba did adapt their pottery products to meet outside demand – about 100 shapes are included in their repertoire – they clung to the coiled clay construction, incised designs, and open bonfire firing methods of their pre-Columbian Mississippian period ancestors. As Mrs. Harris' generation of traditional Catawba potters reached its senior years an interest in Catawba culture has renewed itself. Catawba pottery increasingly has been seen as one of the group's most important links to Catawba tribal identity.

While from the 1930s to the 1960s, the Catawba pottery tradition suffered greatly through the demand for cheaply made Indian goods at tourist centers, Mrs. Harris refused to compromise the quality of her work. She continued to make museum-quality pieces, utilitarian large and small vessels and smoking pipes. "When you make anything, make it to where it can be used," she affirmed. She was largely responsible for the revival of the pipemaking tradition through the use of a squeeze mold, a technique borrowed from neighboring Moravian immigrants in the 19th century and modified for Catawba usage. She introduced important shapes to the Catawba repertoire, such as the graceful snake pitcher, derived from the traditional "snake pot" effigy vessel, the long-necked pitcher and the "wedding vase" introduced from the Southwest. After creating a piece through coil construction and letting it dry, she wet it and rubbed it with smooth rocks to create the velvet-like polished surface typical of Catawba pottery, and then fired it to add the multi-colored burnt shades of black and deep orange.

Georgia Harris was known among her Catawba people as a superlative traditional potter and an exceptionally kind, thoughtful, and generous teacher. She was a role model for other potters and worked with many apprentices and demonstrated in schools and galleries. In 1979, she exhibited and demonstrated at the Smithsonian's Renwick Gallery. Her exquisite work is highly valued by collectors and museums.

ALI AKBAR KHAN

North Indian Sarod Player & Raga Composer

Ali Akbar Khan is a musician whose virtuosity is recognized world-wide. He has been described as "a virtuoso of breathtaking skill" (*Los Angeles Times*), "one of the world's greatest living musicians (*San Francisco Examiner*), and "as rich in artistic imagination as technical mastery" (*London Times*). His family traces its North Indian tradition to Mian Tansen, a musical genius and court musician of Akbar, a Moghul emperor of the 16th century. Ali Akbar Khan's father, the late Allauddin Khan, was the chief disciple of Wazir Khan, a direct descendant of Tansen, and came to be acknowledged as the greatest figure in North Indian music in the 20th century. A strict teacher, Allauddin Khan taught some of the most celebrated Indian artists, including sitarist Ravi Shankar, flutist Pannalal Ghosh, his daughter Annapurna, and his son Ali Akbar.

Born in 1922, Ali Akbar Khan studied music from the age of three under his father's tutelage, first learning vocal music, then studying drums with his uncle Fakir Aftabauddin, and eventually being directed toward the *sarod*. The sarod is a 25-string lute-like instrument made of teak or mahogany body with a goatskin hide stretched over it, and a metal fingerboard. Ten of the strings are played with a coconut-shell plectrum and 15 are sympathetic strings. Under the tutelage of his father, he practiced 18 hours a day for 20 years.

Khansahib (as he is properly called) gave his first public performance at the age of 14, and while still in his early 20s, became the court musician for the Maharaja of Jodhpur, eventually being conveyed the title "Ustad," the Persian word meaning "master musician." He first visited the United States in 1955, at the request of Yehudi Menuhin, and performed at the Museum of Modern Art in New York City. That same year, he also made the first American recording of Indian music and the first television performance of Indian music, on Alistair Cooke's "Omnibus" show. Subsequently, he toured extensively in Asia, Africa, Europe, Australia, and North America. Performance highlights include: the East-West Encounter in Tokyo and at Carnegie and Town Hall in New York; the Festival of India at Philharmonic Hall; Expo '67 in Montreal; and the Berkeley and Monterey Jazz Festivals with saxophonist John Handy.

In addition to being a prodigious performer, composer, and recording artist, he also has continued the teaching tradition of his father. Inspired by the extraordinary interest and abilities of his Western students, he founded the Ali Akbar College of Music in San Rafael, California in 1967. Through the College over 7,000 American devotees have seriously pursued North Indian music. He continues to teach there nine months of the year, and during his annual world tour also teaches at the branch of his college in Basel, Switzerland.

Ali Akbar Khan has received numerous awards, including the President of India Award, the highest award given an artist in India; the *Padma Vibhusan*, awarded in 1988 by the Indian Government; an Honor Award from the Association of Indians in America "for his unique contributions to arts and letters and greater understanding between the peoples of India and America;" and a MacArthur Foundation "genius" grant.

RAMÓN JOSÉ LÓPEZ

Santero & Metalsmith

In the creation of art, there has been no force more potent than the passion of religious belief. This is clearly seen in the rich Hispanic culture of northern New Mexico. Devotion to their Catholic faith was essential to the survival of the Spanish settlers there, whose arrival in the 16th century pre-dated that of the Mayflower on the continent's eastern shores. Self-reliance born of four centuries of isolation produced craftsmen skilled at creating the accoutrements of religious practice and gave rise to local renditions of Spanish-style Catholic iconography. Recent decades have seen a rededication to the distinctive religious artistry of the New Mexican past among a new generation of *santeros* –creators of sacred images. Few contemporary *santeros* are more, highly skilled, versatile and dedicated to tradition than Ramón José López of Santa Fe.

López sees his direct link to tradition in his *santero* grandfather Lorenzo López, who died two years before Ramón was born in 1951. Ramón continues to use many of his grandfather's carving tools. Like his grandfather, López's deep religious faith inspires his work. In the 1970s, López, then a carpenter, began making jewelry, and by 1981 his mastery of Spanish colonial metalworking methods spurred a revival of that craft. He expanded his repertoire to include silver hollowware candlesticks, and ecclesiastic vessels such as chalices, and domestic utensils. Studying the works of 19th century master *santeros*, he began to carve and paint using traditional hand-adzing and polychrome techniques creating *retablos* (two-dimensional portrayals of saints and other sacred images, usually on wood panels), *bultos* (three-dimensional images), and *reredos* (large carved and painted altar screens). He coats local aspen or piñon pine with gesso made from gypsum and rabbit-skin-glue, and works directly on the wood with paint he makes from natural pigments and dyes. His metalwork, carving, and painting skills are now also employed in the creation of diminutive *relicarios*, metal-framed images painted on wood, often with a hidden drawer at the bottom to place a rosary. More recently, he has taken up the rare colonial art of hide painting.

In all that he does, Ramón López credits his cultural heritage and the earlier generations of masters that set the standards toward which he strives: "My traditional work let me see how influenced I really was by my heritage, my history. It showed me my roots in this area – opened my eyes. It's all inspired by my upbringing here, my Catholic religion and my interest in the churches of New Mexico, with all their beautiful altar screens. I want to achieve the level of quality of those old masters – what they captured on wood, emotions so powerful, so moving."

Ramón López is a creator of exquisite works of art, an innovator within tradition, a leader in the New Mexican Hispanic crafts revival, and a dedicated father. He has passed his skills on to his four children and has served as a master artist in the New Mexico Arts Division's state folk arts apprenticeship program. He has won Santa Fe's Spanish Colonial Market's Grand Prize and First Prize on many occasions and has exhibited widely in dozens of venues, including The Albuquerque Museum, the Taylor Museum in Colorado Springs, the New Mexico State Capitol, and the Smithsonian Institution. His work is currently featured in the traveling exhibit *Cuando Hablan Los Santos*, organized by the University of New Mexico's Maxwell Museum.

JIM AND JESSE McREYNOLDS

Bluegrass Musicians

Every musical tradition is comprised of many currents. In bluegrass music, the brother-style close harmony vocal duet is one of the longest and deepest of these important currents, traceable to the 1890s or earlier. It gained wider popularity in the 1930s, when early country music was finding its way onto 78 rpm recordings and clear-channel radio. In the the community of Coeburn in southwestern Virginia, two young brothers named Jim and Jesse McReynolds were two of the most avid listeners and emulators of this music.

Jim McReynolds was born in 1927, and his brother Jesse followed two years later. They were reared in a family of coal miners and farmers who were also accomplished musicians and part-time performers of what was then called mountain music. Grandfather Charles McReynolds was a fiddler who headed up a string band from the 1890s to the 1930s and recorded for RCA during the Bristol sessions in 1927. Their father Claude was a fiddler who performed with his guitar- and banjo-playing brothers in his father's string band. Mother Savannah was a singer of ballads and gospel songs, who loved vocal harmony and taught it to her sons; she also played the banjo and harmonica.

By the early 1940s, Jim and Jesse were playing mandolin and guitar and singing together, and shortly thereafter won a talent contest. They began performing publicly, which later prompted them to embark on their professional musical career. Upon Jim's return from the service in 1947, they performed on a noontime radio show in Norton, Virginia as The McReynolds Brothers and the Cumberland Mountain Boys. Most of the music they played as youngsters was "whatever we heard on the radio," says Jesse. Their musical versatility served them well as they, like nearly all Appalachian bands of the era, roamed widely from one radio station to another throughout the South and Midwest, often performing in musical styles other than bluegrass, such as the western music of the Sons of the Pioneers which helped create the McReynold's distinctive and now famous harmony sound.

In the early 1950s, Jesse developed a mandolin crosspicking technique that added a syncopated effect similar to that of the Scruggs banjo style, and it was imitated widely by his peers. He also created the even more adventurous "split-string" technique in which the "pinkie" finger frets only one of a double course of strings (the mandolin has eight strings arranged in four courses of two strings close together), a style that few could duplicate. In 1952, they signed a recording contract with Capitol Records and changed the name of their group to Jim & Jesse and the Virginia Boys. Their career was disrupted as Jesse went off to the Korean War from 1952-54, after which they resumed performing. Their "big break" did not come until 1964, when they were invited to join the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville, the most coveted of jobs in the bluegrass and country world. They have remained with the Opry for 33 years.

Joe Wilson, director of the National Council for the Traditional Arts, describes the special importance and artistic integrity of the McReynolds brothers: "Jim and Jesse are more than technicians, more than another first generation bluegrass band, more than keepers of a rich family tradition. They are the band that has closely held to the traditional audience for this music. They continued to play for the millhands when others of their generation . . . were adopting more urbane and self-consciously traditional audiences in metropolitan areas and letting those audiences decide what was most traditional. Jim and Jesse can be hired but they can't be bought."

PHONG NGUYEN

Vietnamese Musician & Scholar

Wedged between the powerful civilizations of China and India, Vietnamese musical culture is complex and dynamic. The ebb and flow of conflict and cultural influence for over a 1,000 years has left strong marks on Vietnamese music – notions of scale and mode, instrument types, and ornamented vocal style. While Vietnamese musicians continuously adapted foreign elements, their music maintained its own cultural character, an identity defined by repertoire, special modes and stylistic nuances, categories of music, and other traits. Recent wartime destruction, dislocation, and the powerful attraction of Western popular music have once again challenged the distinctiveness of the Vietnamese musical tradition, and few leaders have met that challenge. In the United States, Phong Nguyen (Nguyen Thuyet Phong, in Vietnamese) – musician, scholar, and cultural advocate – has been the principal voice of his musical tradition.

Phong Nguyen brings a rare and extraordinary combination of talents to his work. He is a traditionally-trained musician who studied with a village master from age five. He was a Buddhist novice for ten years, learning the chant and instrumental accompaniment of *nhac le* (ritual music) tradition. At age 13, he took up the Vietnamese theater music and went on to perform both *cai luong* (reformed theatre) and *hat boi* (court musical theatre) styles professionally. He sings a large repertoire of *dan ca* (folksongs from informal, rural life settings) and at the same time is a master of the complex modal system (called *dieu*) of *nhac tai tu* music, a more formal entertainment musical tradition still active in the United States. He also studied with mountain tribal musicians and learned the *klong put* (bamboo tubes) and *t'rung* (bamboo xylophone).

Nguyen points out that because the separation in social classes is minimal in Vietnamese culture, folk music and art music share many traits and are more similar than in Western societies. "The folk music is principally vocal," he says, explaining their differences. "Meanwhile, in art music there's vocal and instrumental music together. Folk songs are sung without accompaniment. They're chanted in the fields while people are working. They don't bring instruments with them." While he is competent on many Vietnamese instruments, he often focuses on the 17-string *dan tranh* zither and the two-string *dan nguyet* (long-necked "moon" lute).

A soft-spoken man of gentle demeanor, Phong Nguyen left his native land in 1974, one year before the fall of the Saigon government. He first stayed in France, where he performed frequently and earned a doctoral degree in music from the Sorbonne University in 1982. He then resettled in the United States and taught at Kent State University, the University of Washington, and UCLA. He has since performed and taught extensively throughout the U. S., reaching Vietnamese Americans who have limited access to their musical heritage and American audiences. He has many recordings on several labels to his credit, including *Traditional Music of Vietnam* on Lyrichord, *Vietnamese Music in France & the United States* on World Music Enterprises, and *Song of the Banyan* on Music of the World/World Music Institute.

HYSTERCINE RANKIN

African-American Quilter

The aptly titled exhibit of African-American quilts "More Than Something to Keep You Warm" by the renowned photographer/quilt collector Roland Freeman gets right to the heart of the aesthetic dimension of utilitarian tasks. Many necessary activities are also important opportunities for the creation of beauty. One of the quilters featured in that exhibition is Hystercine Rankin of Lorman, Mississippi. When she was twelve years old, two years after her father's death in 1939, Hystercine Rankin's grandmother declared, "Your playing days are over," and began to teach her how to quilt to provide cover for her ten brothers and sisters. "When you had eleven kids that was a lot of cover," recalls Ms. Rankin. Her grandmother was a strict teacher of handstitching, and "If you did something wrong, you pulled it out," she says.

Hystercine Rankin learned her quilting technique and patterns in the most traditional fashion from her grandmother and other women in her community. When she married in her late teens, she and her husband Ezekiel raised seven of her siblings left by her mother's death by cancer, and later the Rankins raised seven of their own children. Ms. Rankin once explained, "I quilt to have covers for the beds to keep the family warm. I run seven beds, [and] I look to have three to four quilts per bed." She also kept a family tradition by giving each child a quilt when they left home. While she was always a prodigious quilter she never thought of herself as an artist.

But her quilts came to be recognized as truly "more than something to keep you warm," and in 1981, she was invited to be a resident artist in the local junior high school, opening her eyes to the artistic dimension of her work. The rich repertoire of traditional patterns, such as the star quilt, string quilt, nine patch, and flower garden which she learned from her grandmother and others, are beautifully elaborated. In addition, the past 15 years of teaching and exhibiting her work has further heightened her creative sense. She created a striking sunburst pattern inspired by seeing the sun's rays breaking through the clouds one afternoon. Some of her most moving work has been her memory quilts that portray important life recollections, such as picking cotton, plowing with a mule, going to church in a horse-drawn wagon loaded with children, and her father's murder at the hands of a white man who was never brought to justice. The stitched narrative reads, "I will never forget that morning. He [my father] sent me to the spring . . . as I went to dip the water, I heard the 4 shots that killed my father."

In 1991, Hystercine Rankin received the State of Mississippi's highest award in the arts, the Susan B. Herron Fellowship. She has been the master quilter and teacher at Mississippi Cultural Crossroads, a local arts organization in Port Gibson since 1988, where her solo exhibition "Visions and Dreams: A One Woman Show" was mounted in 1992. She has exhibited and demonstrated widely throughout the South, appeared in the Smithsonian's Festival of American Folklife in 1996, and been featured in numerous publications, including *The Quilt Encyclopedia Illustrated, American Craft, and Ladies Circle Patchwork Quilts.*

HUA WENYI

Chinese Kunqu Opera Singer

Of the more than 360 discrete forms of Chinese "opera," the style known as *kunqu* (pronounced "kun-chew") is considered to be the oldest and most refined. Music scholar Robert Garfias once compared *kunqu* to the more widely known Beijing style, saying, "If Beijing style is Wagner, *kunqu* is Mozart." Actually, *kunqu* opera predates Mozart. Literally meaning "song of Kun[shan] (a small village in southern China's Jiangsu province), *kunqu* emerged around Shanghai during the early 16th century. In English, it is called "opera" because of the combination of staged drama, singing, and instrumental accompaniment parallel to the European art form. Also similar is the paramount importance of the singer/actor, who in Chinese opera specializes in certain roles. One of the most prestigious and demanding character types in *kunqu* is that of the *guimendan*, or the "refined female." Ms. Hua Wenyi is regarded internationally as the premier model for the *kunqu guimendan*.

Born in 1941 in Shanghai, Hua Wenyi began studying *guimendan* performance technique in 1954 in the Shanghai Opera School as member of the very first class of Kun opera students. By the time she graduated as the school's top student in 1961, she was already widely known in China, Hong Kong and Macao. Her exquisite gesturing, flawless diction, and beautiful voice earned her the sobriquet "Little Mei Lan Fang," after the legendary male performer who set the standard for the performance of the *dan* role. She was a member of the Shanghai Youth Beijing and Kunqu Troupe from 1961-1971. With the onset of the Cultural Revolution in 1971 and its condemnation of traditional Chinese opera's ties to the "feudalistic" past, she was relegated to performing revolutionary Beijing-style works until the downfall of the Gang of Four in 1978. That year, she joined the Shanghai Kun Opera Company and rose to be its director in 1985. In 1986, she received China's highest artistic honor, the Plum Blossom Award for her performance in the play "Yu Zan Ji" (The Jade Hairpin). Also that year, she staged "The Peony Pavilion" at the Edinburgh Festival in Scotland.

Chinese opera scholar Dr. Susan Pertel Jain describes Ms. Hua's artistry: "When one first sees her perform onstage it is immediately apparent, even to those unfamiliar with the intricacies of Kun opera performance, that she is a gifted artist. Hua Wenyi is one of those rare theater performers who transcends the boundaries of the form, reaching a profound understanding of dramatic character which is almost spiritual in nature. Her vocal technique is superb, her movement stylization subtle and graceful."

In 1989, while on tour in the United States, Hua Wenyi and several of her company members decided to stay and further introduce their opera internationally. With many dedicated followers in the U.S., the not-for-profit Hua Kun Opera, directed by Hua Wenyi, is highly regarded both for its strong traditional repertoire and its experimental productions. Performances include the Los Angeles Festival, the 1991 Festival de Teatro Madrid, the 1996 New Haven Festival, and teaching residencies in Barnard College, Ohio's Antioch University, and the University of California at Berkeley.

FRANCIS WHITAKER

Blacksmith/Ornamental Ironworker

Tradition flows from a sense of community, a sense of shared destiny shaped over time from common activities, values, and lot in life. Occupations are an important kind of community from which tradition flows. The bonds of work undergird mutual standards of behavior, ethics, and aesthetic expectations.

A fine example is the occupation of ornamental blacksmithing, in which apprenticed learning and a strong feeling of dedication to a mutual sense of beauty and skillful excellence forge strong communal ties. Often referred to as "the dean of American blacksmiths," Francis Whitaker, more than any other, has strengthened the ties of tradition among blacksmiths across the United States.

Some say it is difficult to tell whether he chose blacksmithing or blacksmithing chose him. Born in Woburn, Massachusetts in 1906, Francis Whitaker left high school at the age of 16 to apprentice with the premier ornamental blacksmith of the day, Samuel Yellin, in Philadelphia. "The first time I took a piece of hot iron out of the fire and started to beat it with a hammer, I was hooked," says Whitaker. "There's a fascination to it that I have never lost. There's a magic to it, taking something, a stubborn material, and doing what you want with it." After a second apprenticeship in Berlin with the German master Julius Schramm, he returned to the United States and settled in Carmel, California in 1927. This period was a heyday for ornamental ironwork and the era of the Spanish Revival design trend in California. Work was plentiful. After working for a general contractor for seven years, he opened his own shop in 1933, during the depths of the Depression. Though times were difficult, "The Depression . . . taught me that if you're dedicated to your work and do good work and are uncompromising about it, there will always be a place for you in society. The others can fall by the wayside, the second-raters." This iron-willed dedication to excellence marked his entire career, spanning nearly three quarters of a century. During his California years, he became friends with John Steinbeck, who used him as a model for a character in *The Long Valley;* his later writer/acquaintance, Leon Uris, would base the heroic character Conner Larkin in his novel *Trinity* on Whitaker.

In 1963, Whitaker moved his shop to Aspen, Colorado. As interest in ornamental ironwork revived, his mastery was sought out by younger blacksmiths hungry for the specialized techniques, skills, and knowledge that had been seriously eclipsed during the economic downturn of the Depression, the disruption of World War II, and the changing styles of American architecture. Then "in 1976 I received the call . . . a mission in life . . . I realized that I was a link between the heyday of wrought ironwork in the early years of this century and the present renaissance of blacksmithing." He spent the next 20 years selflessly devoting himself to passing on his knowledge to the next generation, teaching widely across the United States and founding the Francis Whitaker Blacksmith Schools at both the Rocky Mountain School and the John C. Campbell Folk School. He has received numerous awards, including the 1995 Colorado Governor's Award for Excellence in Arts and an Honorary Doctorate in Humane Letters from the University of Colorado.

THE NATIONAL HERITAGE FELLOWSHIP AWARDEES 1982-1996

1982

Dewey Balfa*
Cajun Fiddler
Basile, LA

Joe Heaney
Irish Singer
Brooklyn, NY

Tommy Jarrell*
Appalachian Fiddler
Mt. Airy, NC

Bessie Jones
Georgia Sea Island Singer
Brunswick, GA

George Lopez*
Santos Woodcarver
Cordova, NM

Brownie McGhee*
Blues Guitarist
Oakland, CA

Hugh McGraw
Shape Note Singer
Trenton, GA

Lydia Mendoza
Mexican-American Singer
Houston, TX

Bill Monroe*
Bluegrass Musician
Nashville, TN

Elijah Pierce*
Carver/Painter
Columbus, OH

Adam Popovich
Tamburitza Musician
Hibbing, MN

Tennessee Ernie Ford*
Banjo Performer
Bristol, TN

Duff Severe
Saddle Maker
Pendleton, OR

Philip Simmons
Ornamental Ironworker
Charleston, SC

Sanders "Sonny" Terry*
Blues Musician
Hollis wood, NY

1983

Sister Mildred Barker*
Shaker Singer
Poland Springs, ME

Rafael Cepeda*
Bomba Musician/Dancer
Santurce, PR

Ray Hicks
Appalachian Storyteller
Banner Elk, NC

Stanley Hicks*
Appalachian Musician/Storyteller/
Instrument Maker
Vilas, NC

John Lee Hooker
Blues Guitarist/Singer
San Carlos, CA

Mike Manteo*
Sicilian Marionettist
Staten Island, NY

Narciso Martinez*
Texas-Mexican Accordionist/Composer
San Benito, TX

Lanier Meaders
Potter
Cleveland, GA

Almeda Riddle*
Ballad Singer
Greers Ferry, AR

Simon St. Pierre
French-American Fiddler
Smyrna Mills, ME

Joe Shannon
Irish Piper
Chicago, IL

Alex Stewart*
Cooper/Woodworker
Smithville, TN

Ada Thomas*
Chitimacha Basketmaker
Charenton, LA

Lucinda Toomer*
Black Quilter
Columbus, GA

Lem Ward*
Decoy Carver/Painter
Crisfield, MD

Dewey Williams
Shape Note Singer
Ozark, AL

1984

Clifton Chenier*
Creole Accordionist
Lafayette, LA

Bertha Cook*
Knotted Bedspread Maker
Boone, NC

Joseph Cormier
Cape Breton Violinist
Waltham, MA

Elizabeth Cotton*
Black Songster/Songwriter
Syracuse, NY

Burlon Craig
Potter
Vale, NC

Albert Fahlbusch
Hammered Dulcimer Maker/Player
Scottsbluff, NE

Janie Hunter
Black Singer/Storyteller
Johns Island, SC

Mary Jane Manigault
Black Seagrass Basket Maker
Mt. Pleasant, SC

Genevieve Mougin*
Lebanese-American Lace Maker
Bettendorf, IA

Martin Mulvihill*
Irish American Fiddler
Bronx, NY

Howard "Sandman" Sims
Black Tap Dancer
New York, NY

Ralph Stanley
Appalachian Banjo Player/Singer
Coeburn, VA

Margaret Tafoya
Santa Clara Pueblo Potter
Espanola, NM

Dave Tarras*
Klezmer Clarinetist
Brooklyn, NY

Paul Tiulana*
Eskimo Maskmaker/Dancer/Singer
Anchorage, AK

Cleofes Vigil*
Hispanic Storyteller/Singer
San Cristobal, NM

Emily Kau'i Zuttermeister*
Hula Master
Kaneohe, HI

1985

Eppie Archuleta
Hispanic Weaver
San Luis Valley, CO

Periklis Halkias
Greek Clarinetist
Astoria, Queens, NY

Jimmy Jausoro
Basque Accordionist
Boise, ID

Mealii Kalama*
Hawaiian Quilter
Honolulu, HI

Lily May Ledford*
Appalachian Musician/Singer
Lexington, KY

Leif Melgaard*
Norwegian Woodcarver
Minneapolis, MN

Bua Xou Mua
Hmong Musician
Portland, OR

Julio Negron-Rivera
Puerto Rican Instrument Maker
Morovis PR

Alice New Holy Blue Legs
Lakota Sioux Quill Artist
Oglala, SD

Glenn Ohrlin
Cowboy Singer/Storyteller/Illustrator
Mountain View, AR

Henry Townsend
Blues Musician/Songwriter
St. Louis, MO

Horace "Spoons" Williams*
Spoons/Bones Player/Poet
Philadelphia, PA

1986

Alfonse "Bois Sec" Ardoin
Black Creole Accordionist
Eunice, LA

Earnest Bennett
Anglo-American Whittler
Indianapolis, IN

Helen Cordero*
Pueblo Potter
Cochiti, NM

Sonia Domsch
Czech-American Bobbin Lace Maker
Atwood, KS

Canray Fontenot*
Black Creole Fiddler
Welsh, LA

John Jackson
Black Songster/Guitarist
Fairfax Station, VA

Peou Khatna
Cambodian Court Dancer/Choreographer
Silver Spring, MD

Valerio Longoria
Mexican-American Accordionist
San Antonio, TX

Joyce Doc Tate Nevaquaya*
Comanche Indian Flutist
Apache, OK

Luis Ortega
Hispanic-American Rawhide Worker
Paradise, CA

Ola Belle Reed
Appalachian Banjo Picker/Singer
Rising Sun, MD

Jenny Thlunaut*
Tlingit Chilkat Blanket Weaver
Haines, AK

Nimrod Workman
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Mascot, TN/Chattaroy, WV

1987

Juan Alindato
Carnival Maskmaker
Ponce, PR

Louis Bashell
Slovenian Accordionist/Polka Master
Greenfield, WI

Genoveva Castellanoz
Mexican-American *Corona* Maker
Nyssa, OR

Thomas Edison "Brownie" Ford*
Anglo-Comanche Cowboy
Singer/Storyteller
Hebert, LA

Kansuma Fujima
Japanese-American Dancer
Los Angeles, CA

Claude Joseph Johnson*
African-American Religious
Singer/Orator
Atlanta, GA

Raymond Kane
Hawaiian Slack Key Guitarist/Singer
Wai'anae, HI

Wade Mainer
Appalachian Banjo Picker/Singer
Flint, MI

Sylvester McIntosh
Crucian Singer/Bandleader
St. Croix, VI

Allison "Totie" Montana
Mardi Gras Chief/Costume Maker
New Orleans, LA

Alex Moore, Sr.*
African-American Blues Pianist
Dallas, TX

Emilio and Senaida Romero
Hispanic-American Craftsworkers in Tin
and Embroidery
Santa Fe, NM

Newton Washburn
Split Ash Basketmaker
Littleton, NH

1988

Pedro Avila*
Mexican-American Accordionist
Donna, TX

Kepka Belton
Czech-American Egg Painter
Ellsworth, KS

Amber Densmore*
New England Quilter/Needleworker
Chelsea, VT

Michael Flatley
Irish-American Stepdancer
Palos Park, IL

Sister Rosalia Haberl
German-American Bobbin Lacemaker
Hankinson, ND

John Dee Holeman
African-American
Dancer/Musician/Singer
Durham, NC

Albert "Sunnyland Slim" Luandrew*
African-American Blues Pianist/Singer
Chicago, IL

Yang Fang Nhu
Hmong Weaver/Embroiderer
Detroit, MI

Kenny Sidle
Anglo-American Fiddler
Newark, OH

Willie Mae Ford Smith*
African-American Gospel Singer
St. Louis, MO

Clyde "Kindy" Sproat
Hawaiian Cowboy Singer/Ukulele Player
Kapa'au, HI

Arthel "Doc" Watson
Appalachian Guitar Player/Singer
Deep Gap, NC

1989

John Cephas
Piedmont Blues Guitarist/Singer
Woodford, VA

The Fairfield Four
African-American a capella Gospel
Singers
Nashville, TN

Jose Gutierrez
Mexican Jarocho Musician/Singer
Norwalk, CA

Richard Avedis Hagopian
Armenian Oud Player
Visalia, CA

Christy Hengel
German-American Concertina Maker
New Ulm, MN

Ilias Kementzides
Pontic Greek Lyra Player
Norwalk, CT

Ethel Kvalheim
Norwegian Rosemaler
Stoughton, WI

Vanessa Paukeigope Morgan
Kiowa Regalia Maker
Anadarko, OK

Mabel E. Murphy
Anglo-American Quilter
Fulton, MO

LaVaughn E. Robinson
African-American Tapdancer
Philadelphia, PA

Earl Scruggs
Bluegrass Banjo Player
Madison, TN

Harry V. Shourds
Wildfowl Decoy Carver
Seaville, NJ

Chesley Goseyun Wilson
Apache Fiddle Maker
Tucson, AZ

1990

Howard Armstrong
African-American String Band Musician
Detroit, MI

Im Bun
Cambodian Silk Weaver
Harrisburg, PA

Natividad Cano
Mexican Mariachi Musician
Monterey Park, CA

Giuseppe and Raffaela DeFranco
Southern Italian Musicians and Dancers
Belleville, NJ

Maude Kegg
Ojibwe Storyteller/Craftsman/Tradition
Bearer
Onamie, MN

Kevin Locke
Lakota Flute
Player/Singer/Dancer/Storyteller
Mobridge, SD

Marie McDonald
Hawaiian Lei Maker
Kamuela, HI

Wallace McRae
Cowboy Poet
Forsyth, MT

Art Moilanen
Finnish Accordionist
Mass City, MI

Emilio Rosado
Woodcarver
Utuado, PR

Robert Spicer
Flatfoot Dancer
Dickson, TN

Douglas Wallin
Appalachian Ballad Singer
Marshall, NC

1991

Etta Baker
African-American guitarist
Morgantown, NC

George Blake
Native American craftsman (Hupa-Yurok)
Hoopa, CA

Jack Coen
Irish-American flautist
Bronx, NY

Rose Frank
Native American cornhusk weaver (Nez
Perce)
Lapwai, ID

Eduardo "Lalo" Guerrero
Mexican-American singer/guitarist/composer
Cathedral City, CA

Khamvong Insixiengmai
Southeast Asian singer (Lao)
Fresno, CA

Don King
Western saddlemaker
Sheridan, WY

Riley "B.B. " King
African-American bluesman
Itta Bena, MI and Las Vegas, NV

Esther Littlefield
Alaskan regalia maker (Tlingit)
Sitka, AK

Seisho "Harry" Nakasone
Okinawan-American musician
Honolulu, HI

Irvan Perez
Isleno (Canary Island) singer
Poydras, LA

Morgan Sexton *
Appalachian banjo player/singer
Linefork, KY

Nikitas Tsimouris
Greek-American musician (bagpipe player)
Tarpon Springs, FL

Gussie Wells
African-American quilter
Oakland, CA

Arbie Williams
African-American quilter
Oakland, CA

Melvin Wine
Appalachian fiddler
Copen, WV

1992

Francisco Aguabella
Afro-Cuban drummer
Manhattan Beach, CA

Jerry Brown
Potter (southern stoneware tradition)
Hamilton, AL

Walker Calhoun
Cherokee musician/dancer/teacher
Cherokee, NC

Clyde Davenport
Appalachian fiddler
Monticello, KY

Belle Deacon
Athabascan basketmaker
Grayling, AK

Nora Ezell
African-American quilter
Eutaw, AL

Gerald R. Hawpetoss
Menominee/Potowatomi regalia maker
Milwaukee, WI

Fatima Kuinova
Bukharan Jewish singer
Rego Park, NY

John Naka
Bonsai sculptor
Los Angeles, CA

Ng Sheung-Chi
Chinese *Toissan muk'yu* folk singer
New York, NY

Marc Savoy
Cajun accordion maker/musician
Eunice, LA

Othar Turner
African-American fife player
Senatobia, MS

T. Viswanathan
South Indian flute master
Middletown, CT

1993

Santiago Almeida
Texas-Mexican conjunto musician
Sunnyside, Washington

Kenny Baker
Bluegrass fiddler
Cottontown, Tennessee

Inez Catalon
French Creole singer
Kaplan, Louisiana

Nicholas & Elena Charles
Yupik woodcarver/maskmaker and skin sewer
Bethel, Alaska

Charles Hankins
Boatbuilder
Lavallette, New Jersey

Nalani Kanaka'ole & Pualani Kanaka'ole Kanahele
Hula Masters
Hilo, Hawaii

Everett Kapayou
Native American singer (Mesquakie tribe)
Tama, Iowa

McIntosh County Shouters
African-American spiritual/shout performers
Townsend, Georgia

Elmer Miller*
Bit and spur maker/silversmith
Nampa, Idaho

Jack Owens*
Blues singer/guitarist
Bentonia, Mississippi

Mone & Vanxay Saenphimmachak
Lao weaver/needleworker and loommaker
St. Louis, Missouri

Liang-xing Tang
Chinese-American *pipa* (lute) player
Bayside, New York

1994

Liz Carroll
Irish-American fiddler
Chicago, IL

Clarence Fountain & the Blind Boys
African American gospel singers
Atlanta, GA

Mary Mitchell Gabriel
Native American basketmaker (Passamaquoddy)
Princeton, ME

Johnny Gimble
Anglo fiddler, (Western Swing)
Dripping Springs, TX

Frances Varos Graves
Hispanic American *colcha* embroidery
Ranchos de Taos, NM

Violet Hilbert
Native American storyteller / conservator (Skagit)
Seattle, WA

Sosei Shizuye Matsumoto
Japanese tea ceremony master
Los Angeles, CA

D.L. Menard
Franco-American Cajun musician / songwriter
Erath, LA

Simon Shaheen
Arab American *oud* player
Brooklyn, NY

Lily Vorperian
Armenian (Marash-style) embroidery
Glendale, CA

Elder Roma Wilson
African American harmonica player
Blue Springs, MS

1995

Bao Mo-Li
Chinese-American *jing-erhu* player
Flushing, NY

Mary Holiday Black
Navajo basketmaker
Mexican Hat, UT

Lyman Enloe*
Anglo-American old time fiddler
Lee's Summit, MO

Donny Golden
Irish-American step dancer
Brooklyn, NY

Wayne Henderson
Appalachian luthier
Mouth of Wilson, VA

Bea Ellis Hensley
Appalachian blacksmith
Spruce Pine, NC

Nathan Jackson
Tlingit Alaskan
woodcarver/metalsmith/dancer
Ketchikan, AK

Dhoroan Kalanduyan
Filipino-American *kulintang* musician
San Francisco, CA

Robert Jr. Lockwood
African American Delta blues guitarist
Cleveland, OH

Israel "Cachao" Lopez
Afro-Cuban bassist, composer, band-leader
Miami, FL

Noble Star Boy Menard
Lakota Sioux quillmaker
Rosebud, SD

Buck Ramsey
Anglo-American cowboy poet and singer
Amarillo, TX

1996

Obo Addy
African American drummer/leader
Portland, OR

Paul Dahlin
Swedish American fiddler
Minneapolis, MN

Juan Gutierrez
Puerto Rican drummer/leader
New York, NY

Solomon & Richard Ho'opi'i
Hawaiian singers
Wailuku, HI

Will Keys
Anglo American banjo player
Gray, TN

Joaquin Lujan
Guamian Blacksmith
GMF Guam

Eva McAdams
Shoshone crafts/beader
Fort Washakie, WY

John Mealing & Cornelius Wright*
African American work songs
Birmingham, AL

Vernon Owens
Anglo American potter
Seagrove, NC

Betty Pisio Christenson
Ukranian-American pysanky
Suring, WI

Dolly Spencer
Inupiat dollmaker
Homer, AK

*(deceased)

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